COURSE ENTRANCE SKILLS
In order to enroll in this course, you must audition or interview with the instructor. Enrollment is by invitation only.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The objective of this course is to teach the basics of theatrical creation, production and performance. After an audition/interview process at the beginning of the fall semester, a Company of 12 actors, 6 playwrights, 2 stage managers and 2 designers will be assembled. Each student accepted will add this course—TA385 Directed Study. Under the mentorship of their instructor, the Company will learn the process of theatrical production by rehearsing and producing an in-class short play. Then, the tools acquired will be put to work in the production of the first annual LAMC Stage & Screen Fest, a festival of original short plays, presented for the Mission College and surrounding communities on Friday, December 11. These plays will be presented on an outdoor stage, near the cafeteria. Admission will be charged. Each of the plays will be directed by Robert Cucuzza.

COURSE MEETING TIME
The course will meet on Fridays for three hours, at a time that works for all of the members of the Company, some time between 9:00 and 5:00. As we approach the presentation of the LAMC Stage & Screen Fest, there may be additional hours required for technical rehearsals. These will be kept to the bare minimum.

STRUCTURE OF COURSE
The first eight weeks will be spent rehearsing, designing, producing and presenting an existing short play in the classroom. The second eight weeks will be spent rehearsing, designing, producing and presenting six original short plays as part of the LAMC Stage & Screen Fest.

CLASS POLICIES
• Attendance is MANDATORY at every session of this class. One of the main aspects of theatre that I’ll be teaching is the idea of “company.” A company cannot function if there are members of the company missing.
• Here are some reasons that this course may not be for you:
You like classes where you can sit in the back and zone out.
You don’t like to move your body.
You are always late to things.

• This is not a lecture class, where you can sneak in five minutes late and get the notes of what you missed. This is a group experience where one person’s tardiness can throw off the entire group. Tardiness is absolutely unacceptable and highly disruptive to any class, but especially to an course like this.
• Scenes are team projects, where you are graded on your ability to collaborate and work together. If you let your team down, your grade will be severely effected.
• Any and all digital devices are absolutely forbidden in this class … and in most acting classes.
• You are responsible to read and comprehend the information contained in this syllabus and in any assigned readings, as well as the information discussed in class. Please see The Student Code of Conduct in the Class Schedule.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE
Profanity is part of most acting classes, across the globe, in the scenes that are worked on and as a communication tool for teachers. We will work primarily on scenes from contemporary plays where the characters often use language that reflects who we are today, which includes profanity. It will never be excessive. As a teacher, I do everything that I possibly can to avoid using profanity in class as a means of inspiration or explanation, but it is unavoidable at times. In order to connect with you, sometimes I need to be able to communicate with you on a visceral level that you can understand. I will never use profanity to demean, criticize or intentionally offend. Nor will I allow my students to do so either.

A NOTE ABOUT SEXUAL HARRASSMENT
Acting is a contact sport. Many scenes require physical interaction between students — a touch, an embrace, a light shove, sometimes even a kiss. Never touch your scene partner without first asking permission and discussing where, when and how the contact will happen. You have the right to say ‘no’ to your scene partner’s request for physical contact, even if the scene demands it. If there is any contact that is unplanned and that you consider inappropriate, leave the rehearsal and contact me immediately at cucuzzrj@lamission.edu.

EMAIL
Your world may run on texting. The world that you are entering runs on email. I will be sending out mass emails to the class, which may go to your LA Mission email account. You need to check this email regularly to pass the class.

HANDOUTS
All assignments, scenes and documents related to this class will be uploaded to the directory on my Mission College web site. I won’t be handing these out in class.

ATTENDANCE
• I take attendance at the beginning of class — on the dot — for the entire semester.
• If you miss two classes, it becomes my decision to exclude you from the course.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
• Demonstrate basic skills of acting, including physical, vocal, imaginative, analytical, and emotional elements.
• Compose a character analysis.
• Analyze dramatic textual components as they pertain to performance.
• Critique a scene from an observer’s point of view, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of that presentation.
• Utilize appropriate theatrical terminology and jargon.

EXCLUSION POLICY: All students who have absences equaling one week’s worth of class time by census date, may be excluded with an effective date prior to census. Title 5, Section 58004c3. If a student stops attending and permanently leaves class, IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO OFFICIALLY DROP FROM CLASS, AND SHOULD NOT RELY ON THE INSTRUCTOR TO DROP THEM.

ALERT: The No Penalty Drop Date is now the day before census (end of the 2nd week for full-term classes). You must drop by that date or you will be assigned a ‘W’ for the class. W’s count against your total attempts. You can only attempt a class 3 times. That includes withdrawals, incompletes and substandard grades.

DISABLED STUDENTS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S) at Los Angeles Mission College is a support system that enables students to fully participate in the college’s regular programs and activities. DSP&S provides a variety of services from academic and vocational support to assistance with Financial Aid. If you are a disabled student and need a modification, special assistance or accommodation in order to participate in this class, alert the instructor promptly and contact the DSP&S office at 818 364-7732 or 818 364-7861. Modifications, special assistance or accommodations can only be made with proper documentation and coordination with DSP&S.

PLAGIARISM
• Plagiarism is the use of the written work of others (either direct copies or close paraphrases) as one’s own original work. If quotations and/or passages from other works are used in papers, they must be accorded the proper citation in order to avoid any misunderstandings about plagiarism. In other words, all written work is to be written by you.
• When there is evidence that a student has committed plagiarism, he or she will receive a zero for the assignment and will be reported to Academic Affairs. A second incident of plagiarism could result in expulsion from the class.
• Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you have any questions about what might be considered plagiarism, please ask me.
Robert Cucuzza is a Los Angeles-based theater artist, filmmaker, and acting teacher. His theater work runs the gamut of musicals, farce, naturalistic plays, adaptations of classics, original work, and devised pieces. In August 2015, he directed his play CIRCLE JERK at the NOW Festival at REDCAT, where he has also presented CATTYWAMPUS, his modern adaptation of Strindberg’s Miss Julie, (also Incubator Arts Project in NYC and South Coast Rep), and the world premiere of Iannis Xenakis’ radio play, POUR LA PAIX. Also in LA, he wrote and directed the musical extravaganza HELLZAPOPPIN’, the swing music homage TURN THE METAL, and directed a radical production of Shakespeare’s MEASURE FOR MEASURE (all at CalArts). His directing work with solo performance artists includes Jillian Lauren’s MOTHER TONGUE (Steve Allen Theater) and Susan Tierney’s SUSAN TIERNEY (Son of Semele, Hollywood Fringe). Other LA directing work includes LEND ME A TENOR at the Lee Strasberg Institute and THE FANTASTICKS and FOR THIS MOMENT ALONE at LAPC Theatre. As a Creative Consultant, he has worked with Miss Prissy and her street dance company The Underground, Rosanna Gamson Worldwide, and with the Creative Entertainment division of Walt Disney Imagineering, where he has developed large scale live events. His stage work with the internal Ernst & Young band “American P.I.” helped them to win the 2011 Battle of the Corporate Bands at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Deemed a “master of mayhem” by The New York Times, his writing and directing work is known for its spectacular vision, controlled chaos, imaginative physicality, dark humor, heightened theatricality and high stakes tension. As a playwright, director and producer in New York, he spent six years as an artist-in-residence at Richard Foreman’s Ontological Theater where he mounted many highly-acclaimed original plays and was a co-founder of the Obie Award-winning Blueprint Series.

As an actor, he is a member of the Obie Award-winning company Elevator Repair Service, with whom he performed in TOTAL FICTIONAL LIE, ROOM TONE, and originated the role of Tom Buchanan in GATZ — a complete staging of the entire text of “The Great Gatsby.” With ERS and GATZ he has played Off Broadway and on the West End in London, and in major festivals and theaters in the U.S, all over Europe and across the globe. After its sold-out Off-Broadway run, who called it “[t]he most remarkable achievement in theater not only of this year but also of this decade...” He has also performed in three plays written and directed by Richard Foreman at the legendary Ontological-Hysteric Theater in New York. He has performed Off-Broadway with Axis Company and in dance-theater works by Bessie award-winners David Neumann and Big Dance Theater.

As a filmmaker, he has written, directed, produced and edited the films THE INVINCIBLE ECKSTEINS, THE BLUE HORIZON, SPEED FREAKS and several shorts, including UNDONE, which is currently in post-production. His film THE ARMED BOY—a silent film created to accompany Karl Jenkins’s modern choral mass “The Armed Man”—was commissioned by the Rackham Symphony Choir in Detroit. As a film actor, he has played lead roles in SPEED FREAKS, MEMOIRS OF MY NERVOUS ILLNESS (opposite Tony Award-winner Jefferson Mays) and THE STRANGE CASE OF MARIE FRANCE, as well as featured roles in other films.
As an acting teacher he has taught popular Scene Study classes in New York City and in Los Angeles, most notably at CalArts, where he taught BFA and MFA actors, and overhauled the graduating actor industry showcase. In LA, he has also taught acting at the legendary Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute, as well as Pierce College. In 2006 he founded ACME Acting Lab in New York, a student-driven acting studio devoted to the creation of professionally produced original plays and films. With his ACME students, he created, produced and directed two plays and two featurette films. In 2013, he founded Studio Cucuzza in Los Angeles.

Originally from Bradford, PA, Cucuzza is a 1990 graduate of Carnegie Mellon University where he received a BFA in Literary and Cultural Studies with a minor in Theatre. He holds a 2011 MFA in Directing from CalArts. He was the recipient of a 1990 Thomas J. Watson Fellowship for a one-year independent study of experimental theater in Europe and a 2010-11 recipient of a Beutner Family Award for Excellence in the Arts at CalArts.

ROUGH CLASS SCHEDULE
(Subject to change)

AUGUST 28
Auditions and interviews

AUGUST 31
Auditions and interviews

SEPTEMBER 1
Company is formed
TA385 is added

SEPTEMBER 4
First read through of plays
Begin table work
Guidelines for playwrights
Guidelines for actors
Guidelines for designers
Guidelines for stage managers

SEPTEMBER 11
First rehearsals
Design presentations

SEPTEMBER 18
Lines memorized

SEPTEMBER 25
First draft of scripts due
OCTOBER 2
Design elements introduced

OCTOBER 9
Final scripts due

OCTOBER 16
Tech and dress
— In-class play productions —

OCTOBER 23

OCTOBER 30
Video storyboards due

NOVEMBER 6
Rehearsals

NOVEMBER 13
Rehearsals

NOVEMBER 20
Rehearsals

DECEMBER 4
Final rehearsals

DECEMBER 11
— LAMC Stage & Screen Fest —

DECEMBER 18
Final evaluations